



W^m HUNTINGTON, S.S.

the root of the matter is found in me. Job. XIX, 28.



W^m HUNTINGTON, S.S.

the root of the matter is found in me. Job. XIX, 28.

THE
N A K E D
BOW OF GOD;
OR,
A VISIBLE DISPLAY
OF THE
JUDGMENTS OF GOD
ON THE
ENEMIES of TRUTH.

By WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

MINISTER of the GOSPEL at Providence Chapel, &c. &c.

AND

AUTHOR of *The SKELETONS; OR, the ARMINIAN and CARNAL
PREACHER DISSECTED.*

*He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors, Psal. vii. 13.
Thy Bow was made quite naked, Hab. iii. 8, 9.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. ROZEA, No. 91, Wardour-Street, Soho;
And Sold by Mr. COAD, Bookseller, No. 12, Silver-street, Golden-square; Mr. MURRAY, Prince's-street, St. Ann's, Soho; Mr. JACKSON, No. 198, Oxford-street; Mr. BAKER, No. 226, Oxford-street; Mr. PARKER, No. 121, Wardour-street; and at Providence Chapel, Titchfield-street, Oxford-street.

[Price Sixpence.]

THE
NATIONAL
BOW OF GOD

IN THE
JUDGMENT OF GOD



IN THE
JUDGMENT OF GOD

THE
NATIONAL
BOW OF GOD

TO THE
R E A D E R.

CHRISTIAN Reader, (if such thou art), daily observation of the judgments, mercies, and providences of God, is very establishing to faith; because God has promised that *his hand shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies* (a). It is likewise a sufficient proof of the authenticity of scripture; because, on the one hand, we daily see God's judgments on the wicked brought to light, as his daily goodness appears conspicuous on the righteous; therefore we are commanded to behold *the goodness and severity of God* (b). I am fully persuaded that the whole train of events were laid in the secret counsel of God from all eternity, and were by the Holy Ghost made known to God's eminent servant; and that the revolving wheel of Time turns up its prizes and

(a) Isa. lxvi. 14.

(b) Rom. xi. 22.

blanks as fast as it rolls, and will, until the whole *mystery of God is finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets (a)*. Comparing visible facts with God's word, and tracing them up to God, their first cause, is sweet employment for a spiritual mind, and an excellent antidote against vanity. *He that will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord (b)*. It is cast as a reproach upon Israel, that they soon forgot his works; and those who *consider not the operation of his hands, he will destroy, and not build them up (c)*. A watchful eye on the hand of God is a great enemy to unbelief: even Thomas himself, though he gave the testimony of ten men the lie, yet he credited what he saw; yea, even the murderers of the Saviour, when they saw the whole frame of nature convulsed, said, *Truly this was the Son of God*.

David, upon a proper reflection of the hand of God appearing so visible on him, was brought to confess, that goodness and mercy had followed him all his days; and good old Jacob on his death-bed owned, that God had fed him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil.

(a) Rev. x. 17.

(b) Psal. cvii. 43.

(c) Psal. xxviii. 5.

TO THE READER.

v

Trials and difficulties have a tendency to lead us into this heavenly art of watchfulness. In deep poverty the kind providence of God appears; in persecutions his judgments on the wicked show themselves; and in soul distresses, his supporting, sin-subduing, and soul-comforting grace is made manifest. Thus the poor widow in her poverty sees the spring of kind Providence in her *cruse of oil* (a); and David, in his soul's deep distress, found God's wonderful grace bringing him out of the pit, and establishing his feet on the rock: persecuted Israel, too, at the Red Sea, saw destruction ride in triumph.

A Christian is not in his right element if his eye is taken from the hand, or handy-works, of God. If a person in distress has no eye to God, he has work enough to bear up under it; and that soul who has no eye to God in prosperity, robs him daily of his tribute of praise, and goes the readiest way to close the bountiful hand of his Maker, by burying his mercies in oblivion. Unwatchfulness, ingratitude and covetousness, are enough to entail a curse upon all our tem-

(a) 2 Kings iv. 7.

vi TO THE READER.

poral mercies; and he that boasts of his wisdom, prudence, and industry, is said to *sacrifice to his own net, and burn incense to his own drag (a)*. This is not acting like a Christian, but like the King of Babylon, who walked in his palace, boasting of his majesty, honour, and buildings, till the thundering voice of God from heaven knocked him from the pinnacle, and levelled him with the brute creation, even until seven years rolled over his head; and when he was brought to his senses, then he owned that *the Most High ruled*.

I must confess I have too frequently, to God's dishonour, and my own soul's discomfort, been off my watch-tower; but the few observations I have made of his providence have loudly proclaimed his tender and parental care both for me and for my family; and the judgments which I have seen a just God inflict on his enemies, have as loudly proclaimed his discriminating grace, and terrible majesty; while my own weaknesses, and imperfections, have as sweetly instructed me in his long forbearance, mercy, faithfulness, and unchangeable love in Christ Jesus.

(a) Hab. i. 16.

I could

I could most earnestly wish to write a little treatise on each of these three subjects, if the Most High should spare my life; but at present I intend chiefly to treat—*of the judgments of God*, which I have known him to inflict on persecutors, who have opposed me—the most unworthy instrument he ever made use of in his vineyard; but by the grace of God I am what I am.

If my reader is an opposer of the Gospel, God may bless it as a caution; and, if a Christian indeed, mercy may appear the sweeter. Let us sing then of mercy and of judgment: but mercy stands first; therefore we must sing of mercy in the highest key.

I should not have sent this awful account of God's judgments abroad into the world, if the word of God had forbidden it. But when God raised up Pharaoh as a butt for his vengeance, it was *that his name*, as a God of justice, as well as of mercy, *might be proclaimed throughout the earth*; and indeed the Acts of the Apostles abound with accounts of God's judgments; nor should I have hinted at the names of the persons on whom these judgments fell, had not the
scripture

scripture informed me of Pashur, Ananias, Sceva the Jew, Sapphira, Herod, Elymas the forcerer, &c. all distinguished by both their actions and names. Therefore we ought to behold the works of God, in order that we may declare amongst the people his *doings*, and to say with the holy man of God, *that which is with the Almighty, will I not conceal*. God may bless this awful account to some poor soul, who is at war with his Maker; if so, I shall have my reward. May the Lord of his infinite mercy give us success in all the nets we may cast.

Reader, fare thee well.

Thine to serve in the Gospel,

W. H.

T H E
N A K E D
B O W O F G O D.

IT was at Kingston upon Thames in Surry, where God was pleased to convince me effectually of the evil of sin, and of the dreadful judgment of God to which I was exposed: his heavy hand made my spirit stoop, and the agonies of my soul appeared in many a gloomy shade on my fallen countenance, insomuch that my fellow-workmen could easily perceive it; while the terrors of God appearing in battle array against me, prohibited me from joining them in their vain and filthy conversation, or assembling with them in public-houses. This set me up as a mark, or subjected me to all their oaths and malice. But one man in particular was a most dreadful enemy to me; he, at times, uttered such blasphemies, that I have been obliged to
B leave

leave the nursery, and wander in the fields like a pelican of the wilderness, or an owl of the desert; and this at a time when I had a family to maintain on the scanty pittance of eight shillings per week, two of which I paid for a ready furnished lodging; therefore could ill afford to lose time, in wandering in this solitary way: but that same man, some time after, fell sick; and as God had delivered my soul out of trouble, I was determined to visit him, which I accordingly did; and as soon as I saw him, this noble champion for Satan's cause was dissolved into many tears at the sight of that man on whose head he had formerly showered so many heavy curses. I stood astonished to see a person so depressed, and bowed down under the heart-felt dart of all-conquering and triumphant Death, who in his health could boast of his strength, of his valour, of his excesses, and of his disdain of all thoughts of God and of futurity. I asked him if I should pray for him; he wept and said, yes. I did so; but the answer flowed into my own bosom; for before I departed, he cursed the limb of his own body, where he saw that Death had made his first attack; and soon after he closed his eyes in sorrow.—His name was Costar.

Thus are the wicked cut down as the mown grass; and, under the burning ire of God, they wither as the green herb.

From Kingston I went to live at Sunbury in Middlesex. My guilt, distress, and temptations went
along

along with me. I had often ignorantly confessed with my lips that I was "tied and bound with the chain of my sin," and had prayed (without the heart) the pitifulness of God's great mercy to loose me.—But now I was sensibly acquainted with the import of those words, and also that other part of the Church service, "Deliver me from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath and everlasting damnation." These were the groaning petitions of my burthened heart. Having waded through that summer, and the winter before it, in these perilous depths of revealed wrath, the family I served went to London, and left a woman, one of the baser sort, to keep the house. She soon perceived the sorrow of my mind, and the tender regard I paid to holiness; and being constrained at times to reprove, and at other times to admonish her, she kept her mouth as it were with a bridle from sin, though I believe it was a great *pain and grief* to her. At other times she would talk about religion, and appear in a garb of sanctity. This hypocrisy was assumed in order to sift me; and as I longed for some person to condole with me, I often hinted to her the sore temptations which I laboured under; and finding that my speaking to her assuaged my grief and eased my complaint, I thought her a friend that took pity.—But afterwards she turned all into ridicule, broke forth into the vulgar tongue, and appeared with every feature of the devil's image. However, we must expect those swine to turn again

12 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

from their hypocritical profession to their former filthiness, and rent our souls with reproach, if we are so foolish as to cast our pearls before them. All the rest of the winter I heard nothing from her mouth, but contempt upon all that appeared sacred, or serious; and what I had told her of my fore temptations she cast in my teeth; this was like striking the dying dead. But in the summer I escaped the scourge of her tongue, and went to live at Ewell in Surry, where I was informed some time after by a Mr. Harkle, a grocer, that the same woman had been extremely ill, and in her illness was violently tempted to murder her child that lay with her; and fearing lest she should perpetrate this horrid crime, she leaped out of bed, ran naked into the fore court, was brought in again by force, and soon after expired.—Thus she felt, and died, in the temptations of Satan, which she had so often laughed at, and out of which God in mercy delivered me. *Is there not a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity (a)? Thus was the triumph of that wicked wretch short, and the joy of that hypocrite but for a moment (b); and as she had laughed at calamity, she went not unpunished (c).*—Her name was Cole.

At Ewell I first began to speak for God; and indeed I had been so marvellously delivered, and was blessed with such a sense of everlasting love in Christ

(a) Job xxxi. 3.

(b) Job xx. 5.

(c) Prov. xvii. 5.

Jesus,

Jesus, that I was constrained to it. (But more of this in a treatise by itself, if God permit.) This preaching of Christ raised me many enemies; but one man in particular seemed more furious against me than any other; it was a rare thing to pass him without many heavy curses. The gentleman I was gardener to manufactured gun-powder, employed many hands at that work, and gave me leave to supply the workmen with any vegetables that were not wanted in the family. I generally gave this noted enemy the greatest share, to see if it were possible to *overcome evil with good*. He would receive what I brought, at my hands with a smile, and thank me; but as soon as my back was turned, he would storm my ears with every oath and imprecation which his venomous lips could utter, or even imagination suggest. God's long-suffering mercy permitted him thus to reign as a persecutor about six months, at the expiration of which time God laid his heavy hand on him while at his work, on the same spot where he generally uttered his blasphemy. He was carried home sick, and in a few hours the inundation of his guilt began to break up, and the flood-gates of vindictive wrath to be opened. This alarmed his benumbed conscience to that degree, that his ghastly visage seemed to express all the horrors of the damned. He began to confess his feelings, and to tell others of the perilous voyage he was about to make. But God struck him dumb, which caused him to
howl

14 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

howl like a dog, and bellow forth like a bull, until he was forced to submit to the fatal dart of Death. —His name was Toppin.—This was another arrow from the quiver of God;—and though it may appear a light thing with many, in the midst of health, to boast of their strength and of their valour, in opposing the lips of truth, and in defying the arm of Omnipotence, yet when the snares of death begin to entangle their carnal minds, and the pains of hell to invade their guilty consciences, they soon find a sense of these things sufficient to wither in a moment all their boasted strength.

Another man, who was employed by my master as a carter, (to drive his team), whom I had often reproved for swearing, and to whom I had talked freely about the state of his soul, once answered, that he never in all his life had been troubled one minute about futurity, or what would become of him hereafter. This I told him I could not believe; but he confidently assured me he never had. I often therefore laboured in conversation with him, to beget some serious thoughts in his mind, as he appeared so extremely insensible; but as he had no feeling, it was very hard to reason with him; and to discourse with him about scripture was of little use, as he could neither read nor write. I however frequently continued to talk to him of his state, and of what the Saviour came to do for us, till at length he would listen to me attentively; and once or twice he went
with

with me to hear the Gospel. I often, too, cautioned him against spending his money, and hurting his family and constitution, by which means some little restraint seemed to be laid on him for a time: but when a suitable temptation was laid in his way, he broke through all bounds into the greatest excesses, and thus laboured hard to fetch up what he deemed his former lost time. As I went early one morning to the garden, I met him going to load his team. I perceived him stagger with liquor before I came near him, when he said, Gardener, give me a pinch of snuff: I replied, Philip, you are intoxicated, and have been drunk all night. Upon this he sneered at me, hung down his head, and told me he should be drunker before night, which he accordingly was; for he came back from Wandsworth as drunk as possible. At Ewell, however, he insisted on having one pint of cyder more: the landlady refused him, but half a pint he would have, nor would he go without it, which he accordingly got. When he had drank this, he made shift to get upon the shafts of the carriage, and on Ewell Common he whipped the horses into a gallop, and kept them in that pace down the first hill on the Common; but in this mad career he lost his foot-hold, slipped from the shafts, and the broad wheel going over his head, shoulders, and hands, left him a trophy to Death.—His name was Philip Cooke.—This was another shaft from the Naked Bow of God; and happened on a day when

when the horse-races were run at Epsom. Some people on horseback coming down the opposite hill saw the awful accident, and I thought God had left that spoil in the road, as a check to the prancing career of pleasure-takers.—I went out, and looked at the corps as it lay on the common, and had many soul-distressing thoughts about the infernal course which I feared his departed spirit steered.—I went home, and wept all the whole night long: pray for him I could not, for I knew his doom must be for ever fixed, before any petition from my mouth could reach the propitious ear of God.

The next day being the Lord's Day, I went to hear a gentleman preach at Mitcham: his text was, *We have an advocate with the Father, &c.* in which discourse he spake much of our pity to our fellow-creatures, (descending even to accidents,) but of our unpitifulness to Christ. I took it as an awful reproof from God to me, as the gentleman never saw me before, nor did any there know the before-recited circumstance.—The preacher was Mr. Jos. whom I believe to be one of the greatest labourers in the vineyard of God.—I thought God sent that as a reproof to me for crying all night after one who had been so thoughtless of his Maker, and so regardless of his own soul.

Having preached, exhorted, reprov'd and invited many of these poor people to Christ Jesus, I perceived I had not laboured in vain; several were effectually wrought

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 17

wrought upon; one in particular, whose name was Webb, as also his wife. This poor man appearing ferious among his fellow-workmen, they became much enraged against him; the more so, as I preached at Webb's house: and one of the men being determined to get him turned out of his employment, laid a scheme to this purpose, and abused the master's ear with false reports; who accordingly told Webb that he should require such and such things of him, or he must leave the work on the Saturday following. This poor man, whom I dearly loved, came with his complaint to me; informing me also of the deep design which his fellow-workmen had formed, and of the falsehoods which they had fabricated; as also of the impossible task which the master required of him; and added, that he was loth to lose his work, as his own parish was as far distant as Gloucestershire. I told him we would go and tell God of it; and I bid him watch and see if he did not turn all their counsel into foolishness. We accordingly prayed together every morning early, all the rest of the week; and when Saturday night came, the master said nothing about discharging him. The enemy seeing his measures baffled, abandoned his work, went to the ale-house, and continued a week in a state of intoxication. This circumstance set poor Webb higher in his master's favour than ever, and much incensed him against the other person. The consequence of this drinking fit was, that he was

18 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

thrown into a deep decline, carried home to his own parish at Whitton in Middlesex; and when the pains of Death began to rouse his conscience, he confessed that he had, at different times, embezzled his master's property, and then bowed his head to the *King of terrors* (a).—His name was Hall.—*Surely, with our eyes we beheld, and saw the reward of the wicked* (b).

From Ewell I removed to Thames-Ditton in Surry, where I soon received an invitation to preach the word of God at Woking, and some time after an invitation to preach at Warpsledon. To this invitation I acceded; and great numbers came to hear me. I delivered a discourse from these words in John's Gospel, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God* (c)? In this work I found both freedom and power; the auditory, too, were very attentive. When the sermon was over, there came a good looking reputable farmer up to me, and said, "God give me that faith which you have preached." I answered, "Amen; faith is the gift of God." The man, in consequence, began to search the scriptures, associated with those who feared God, and for several days appeared to be convinced, and very serious. But soon after this there came a clergyman to him, desiring him to mount his horse, and go a-hunting with him. He was of the establishment of the *Church of England*, (mark that); not of the *Church of God*: if he had,

(a) Job xviii. 14.

(b) Psal. xci. 8.

(c) John ix. 35.

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 19

he would not have gone a-hunting. The farmer mounted, and went with this clerical hunter. Perhaps this *hospitable act* was intended to divert the farmer's mind from what is termed *Methodistical melancholy*. What instruction the ecclesiastical sportsman gave him, I know not; but at his return from the chace, he appeared a scorner, laughed at the doctrines which he had heard, and persecuted those who embraced them. But God soon stopped his persecution, by afflicting him, and throwing him on a sick bed. One of my congregation, with whom he used to associate, visited him in this situation, and asked him what he then thought of the doctrine he had formerly heard. He said he knew they were the truth, and his own conscience told him so, even when he spoke against them. However, God allowed him to hear no more; for he went to his long home ere another fortnight elapsed, at the expiration of which time I was to preach there again. Such blind ecclesiastics "shut up the kingdom of God against men; they enter not in themselves, and such as are going, they hinder; woe unto them (a)!"

The word of God gaining ground in this parish, greatly offended the blind guide; therefore he thought it necessary to furnish himself with a few two-penny sermons, fit to stop the growth of the Gospel.—You know, *dumb dogs* cannot bark without notes. One of these two-penny farragos was served

(a) Matt. xxiii. 13.

26 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

upon the Lord's-day to his congregation, with a view to debase me, whom he was pleased to stile, *a fellow from the plough-tail, pretending to inspiration*. If this journeyman divine had gone home and read his Bible, he would have found Elifha was at the plough-tail, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, when God sent Elijah to *call him* (a); and the Bible informs us that a *double portion* of God's Spirit was upon him. Therefore I am not the first ploughman who pretended to inspiration; and for my part, I would sooner be a *spiritual ploughman*, than a *hunting divine*; for I believe every preacher who is useful in ploughing up God's mysteries, and sinners' hearts, is a spiritual ploughman. No man, (says Christ), having put his hand to the plough, and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Jeremiah tells us to plough up the fallow ground of the heart, and sow not among thorns. Therefore I to my plough, and he to the chace.

However, this cry of false fire in the church, sent many flaming with rage to the meeting-house; and no wonder, when the host was mustered and parolled by a master of arts. I believe that a mob inflamed from the pulpit, and encouraged by a bench, would think they did God service, if they made the Church of Christ to swim in blood. *The time cometh when whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service; and all these things will they do unto you, because they know not my Father nor me.*

(a) 1 Kings xix. 19.

Among this impenitent host one appeared more furious than the rest. He sat and laughed in my face, preach how or what I could; and then went and informed people what tricks he had played with poor women who came to hear me: but he was so famous for lying, that he himself became a proverb; therefore none would credit him, even if he told the truth. God permitted this man to reign about two years, and then laid him on a bed of sickness. At this time a young man went to visit him, and asked him what he *then* thought of the doctrines of the Gospel: he said, "Get away with your damned nonsense, and let me hear no more of it." God took him at his word, and instantly bereft him both of his speech, and rationality: he struck him both mad and dumb in a moment; and soon the harbinger of Death began to chase life through all his veins.—Finding this, he lay on his back, and fought like a tiger. What views of hell his imagination was impressed with, I cannot determine; however, he soon closed his eyes in death.—His name was M——n.—*Thus did the Almighty bend his Bow, and make it ready; he also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors (a).*

I one day at Woking in Surry was preaching from these words, *O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory (b)?* On that day curiosity led two poor widows to hear me, who got their bread by dig-

(a) Psal. vii. 12, 13.

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 55.

22 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

ging sand, and selling it. A few days after, they went to dig sand on Sen Heath, and some of their children with them; when, as the women were digging in the hole under ground, one of the children said, "Mother, come away; the ground moves:" but they had no power to move, so it fell in, and smothered them both. Thus God sent me to preach their funeral sermon, and succeeded it with a strange burial. "The pestilence that walketh in darkness is God's servant, and so is the destruction that wasteth at noon-day (a)."

I had now been some time at Thames-Ditton, in the miserable occupation of coal-heaving, and with a miserable company of coal-heavers, who daily assailed my ears with their oaths and lewd conversation, until my soul was bowed down within me: but whenever I could get into a stable, hay-loft, or store-house, to spend a moment with my God in prayer, it was as though I were wafted up into the third heaven; so sweetly did I feel the *founding of his bowels toward me (b)*. I one day, in an agony, asked his blessed Majesty, wherefore he permitted me to labour among such men, as he had made my conscience so tender of sinning, and given me an holy indignation against it; adding, that I feared it would in time harden my heart; and beseeching him to send me somewhere else to live, though it were in a wood, rather than let me hear the *filthy conversation of the wicked*. In

(a) Psal. xci. 6.

(b) Isa. lxiii. 15.

answer to my petition, he sent these words as a powerful reproof; *Do men light a candle to put it under a bushel (a) ?* I was fully convinced from that hour, that I was to appear in a more public character, and I never prayed that I might live in a wood afterwards.

Seeing the whole place given up to blasphemy and dissipation, I found a desire to preach to these miserable beings; hoping that God would make it useful to them, for I grieved to see and hear their wickedness.

It happened on a certain day, that myself and others were unloading a barge of coals, at which time I laboured under sore temptations; and to add to the burthen, I experienced extreme poverty, and an empty cupboard at home; various temptations within, and filthy conversation without, drove me to my *zuits end*. The men soon after agreeing to go to the public-house to dinner, I went under the barge tilt, or cabin, and wrestled hard with God in prayer, telling him of my little ones wanting bread, and how hard I felt it, to see them suffer: to which he sent me this sweet, soul-satisfying answer, *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich (b)*. Finding great liberty with my God in prayer, I wept for joy, and further asked him, wherefore such a desire after the salvation of souls was kindled in my heart, if he did not intend to make me useful to them, as he had made me useful to many others? To which

(a) Matt. v. 15.

(b) Rev. ii. 9.

24 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

he gave me this answer, *Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it (a)*. I got up, wiped my eyes, and came away *with my countenance no more sad (b)*, having enjoyed a better repast than any of them, and found by happy experience, that *man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live (c)*. I told a friend the same day, that I was to preach the Gospel at Ditton: and soon after a door was opened to another man, whom God gave but little to say. The person was a London professor; but I have reason to fear that he was not a possessor of the grace of God, and indeed his wretched life soon evinced it. The week following I was invited to preach at this place to a numerous auditory, who appeared very attentive, and God's presence was much with me: for during several weeks many heard me gladly, and approved much of the doctrine. But several persons who were good customers to the publicans, seeming rather serious, and my zealous exclamations against dissipation, soon raised a storm, which beat violently on my head for several years; however, many still attended; and some few seemed really to be called.

One man in particular appeared to be convinced, and soon after brought his wife with him, who seemed *to receive the seed by the way side (d)*, or to begin where

(a) Rev. iii. 8.

(b) 1 Sam. i. 18.

(c) Deut. viii. 3.

(d) Matt. xiii. 19.

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 25

she should have left off, namely, *with joy*. But the world beginning to laugh at her, withered all her joy (a), and kept her from hearing any more; and she in consequence being ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, began to oppose her husband, who left my ministry also, to the great grief of my soul. Soon after this, I saw that he had mounted *the scorner's chair* (b). I one day, passing him, received the following taunt, "Pray, are *you* born again, Mr. Inspiration?" My soul felt his *cruel mockings* (c), but I made no reply. However, soon after he had this awful dream, namely, that the end of the world was come, and that God rained fire and brimstone from heaven on the wicked, and that he saw the felicity of the righteous, and those whom he despised among them; but his portion was with the damned. Being dreadfully disturbed in his sleep, he endeavoured to get from under the awful storm, and catching fast hold of the bedstead, immediately awoke, and soon found his conscience was as effectually awakened as himself. In great distress of mind he went weeping to several of his companions, telling them the dream, and his present distress on that account; from whom he received no more sympathy than Judas, who confessed to the high-priest, (in the anguish of despair), that *he had sinned, and betrayed innocent blood*; whose disconsolate answer was, *What is that to us? see thou to that* (d).

(a) Mark iv. 6.

(c) Heb. xi. 36.

(b) Psal. i. 1.

(d) Matt. xxvii. 4.

26 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

However, this dream appeared to come from God; *God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men (a).*

This dream proved sufficient to stop the lips of contempt, to wither the strength of his tabernacle, cast him into a deep decline, and to lay him on his death-bed. A friend of mine visited him, and by his own desire I went and prayed by him, spake to him, and had some little hope of his soul's welfare. But a person under the alarms of wrath, and in the agonies of death, pours forth such confessions and floods of tears, that it is difficult at times to distinguish between genuine repentance, and that which is common to nature. However, he soon went into eternity, and by this time knows certainly whether inspiration is really requisite, or not.—His name was Munfield.

Soon after this, a woman who had a kitchen adjoining the room I preached in, and a chamber over it, invited a company of barge-men to come and drink with her. They opened the kitchen door which stood next the door of my meeting, where they sat, and drank, and sung together, in order to prevent me from being heard: this not having the desired effect, she went up stairs, and with the heels of her shoes stamped so loud, that I could scarcely hear one word which I uttered; but finding I still pro-

(a) Job xxxiii. 14, 15.

ceeded,

ceeded, and the room being filled with hearers, they laid the following scheme. This ungodly, drunken wretch, was to enter the meeting, and strike any of the poor women who sat to hear the word; and in case any of my friends should offer to hold her hands, or turn her out, she was to cry *Murder*, as a signal to the rebel host to enter to her assistance. This was accordingly accomplished: the mob entering, broke the doors to pieces, burnt *assafœtida*, and emptied *soilage* from a privy into the meeting. After their battling, and breaking the seats to pieces, this masculine heroine, and leader of the wretched crew, not satisfied with the mischief already done, broke an entire window all to shivers. The place of worship and myself being licensed, we procured a warrant, and took some of the offenders before a bench of magistrates, but to no purpose; for I soon perceived by their bitter appearance, that *judgment was turned into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock* (a). So Truth and Innocence went back mourning in sackcloth; and well they might, when they saw their two sisters, Judgment and Equity, lye dead in the court.

However, our adversaries meeting with more encouragement than us, we were attended home by them with their hats adorned with blue ribands, &c. and on their arrival, the whole parish appeared in triumph; the bells were immediately rung, and my

(a) Amos vi. 12.

28 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

little cottage was beset on all sides; my effigy then was made and burnt, a blasphemous harangue delivered as a funeral sermon over this figure of straw and rags, and unutterable insolence was sung in imitation of a solemn anthem. Upon this, one and all cried out, they were for the High Church: and indeed none could properly doubt of that, who saw the *height* of their wickedness; for had they been Turks or Pagans, they would have been ashamed of such conduct.

I shut myself up for some hours, and cried to God, whose displeasure seemed to appear against them, by sending a violent storm of rain, which put an end to their funeral procession. At that instant this word came with power to my heart, *they that strive with thee, shall perish* (a).

Some few days after this, my female adversary was at a friend's house of mine, and in the same room where I preached, and he spake to her of her dreadful wickedness. She replied, "I know he preaches the truth; but I shall get worse and worse." Upon this my friend told her that she had drank too much; but her reply was, she should be drunker before night, or words to that effect.

This poor wretch had an associate, who lived near my little cottage, where they generally held their consultations with a company of barge-men, who assisted them in executing their wicked designs. The

(a) Isa. xli. 11.

same night she behaved so desperate, that even the publicans themselves turned her out of doors: she continued, however, to disturb the neighbourhood till midnight, and at five o'clock the next morning was found dead at the door of her above-mentioned intimate acquaintance. The neighbourhood seemed much alarmed, but presently after a shouting was heard from several parts. I enquired into the cause of this uproar, and was informed that myself, or some of my hearers, had laid violent hands upon her, for they traced her by drops of blood. A coroner was sent for, and a jury called: afterwards a physician was brought, to see where the wound was given; but on examination it was found that her death proceeded from the effects of drinking, and not from any stroke of violence. Thus was she publicly exposed, to the shame and confusion of all her wicked companions.—Her name was Barret.—*Every morning doth the Almighty bring his judgments to light: He faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame (a).*

After this judgment had appeared in so conspicuous a manner, the joy and encouragement which several of my enemies had received from the bench, appeared for a time visibly to wither; and indeed *the triumph of the wicked is but short at most (b)*. Many, I believe, were able to see the flaming sword of God wielded in the defence of truth and innocency, though the temporal sword appeared a defence to vice.

(a) Zeph. iii. 5.

(b) Job xx. 5:

30 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

My congregation now enjoyed a little respite, and we walked comfortably in the ways of God ; but this was of short duration. A gentleman who came to live in the place, kept a great retinue of servants, and they by their number, countenance, and the assistance of their master's cellar, gave fresh life to the vanquished host. This caused my neighbours to rally their forces for a re-engagement. But after a few weeks hotter battle than the first, God's Bow appeared bent again. One poor youth, who had long blasphemed at the door, even in my face when preaching, was taken ill, and put to bed. In the same evening a fellow-servant went to see how he did, and found him dangerously ill. He asked her what hour the clock struck; she answered, Eleven; " Oh ! (said he) at twelve I shall run my last." Accordingly, when the clock struck that hour, he swore a dreadful oath; but divine vengeance immediately loosed the hinge of his jaw; it fell; and he, having *filled up the measure of his sin*, was allowed to swear no more.—This was another arrow from the quiver of God.

This circumstance, however, put but little stop to the enraged mob. Countenanced as they were by the bench, encouraged from the pulpit, together with the assistance which they received from the parish officers, these were sufficient to strengthen any hands against Christ, especially where preventing grace is withheld. Soon, therefore, were our doors and windows broken to pieces again; and even part of a neighbour's

neighbour's wall was pulled down, to furnish them with materials for mischief: the owner of the wall not being a man of our lineage, applied to a clergyman, (who held the temporal sword of God), and *he* found redress; the enemies being obliged to build up the wall again at their own expence: but as to the damage which *we* had sustained, *we* could procure no redress; consequently were obliged to repair the injury done us at our own cost. This effectually convinced us, that our vain repetitions, formerly put up in a state of ignorance, for *magistrates to receive grace, "to execute justice, and to maintain truth,"* were never heard; because Truth appeared the greatest enemy that they had.

Some time after this, a *man* came into the meeting, at a time while I was preaching, dressed in a woman's bonnet, petticoat, and a black oil-skin cloak, his face smeared with tallow, and coloured with soot: he placed himself in a corner of the room, and stood motionless, till the audience were thrown into confusion, and then he withdrew. The next day we were hooted through the village, and were told that the devil had made his appearance at our meeting the night before; and so the event nearly justified: for not many days after, this very man was sent to Kingston jail for debt; but as he was a friend to the High Church, a minister and some others raised a contribution, in order to release him, which in a short time was effected accordingly. However, although
he

30 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

My congregation now enjoyed a little respite, and we walked comfortably in the ways of God ; but this was of short duration. A gentleman who came to live in the place, kept a great retinue of servants, and they by their number, countenance, and the assistance of their master's cellar, gave fresh life to the vanquished host. This caused my neighbours to rally their forces for a re-engagement. But after a few weeks hotter battle than the first, God's Bow appeared bent again. One poor youth, who had long blasphemed at the door, even in my face when preaching, was taken ill, and put to bed. In the same evening a fellow-servant went to see how he did, and found him dangerously ill. He asked her what hour the clock struck; she answered, Eleven; " Oh ! (said he) at twelve I shall run my last." Accordingly, when the clock struck that hour, he swore a dreadful oath; but divine vengeance immediately loosed the hinge of his jaw; it fell; and he, having *filled up the measure of his sin*, was allowed to swear no more.—This was another arrow from the quiver of God.

This circumstance, however, put but little stop to the enraged mob. Countenanced as they were by the bench, encouraged from the pulpit, together with the assistance which they received from the parish officers, these were sufficient to strengthen any hands against Christ, especially where preventing grace is withheld. Soon, therefore, were our doors and windows broken to pieces again; and even part of a neighbour's

neighbour's wall was pulled down, to furnish them with materials for mischief: the owner of the wall not being a man of our lineage, applied to a clergyman, (who held the temporal sword of God), and *he* found redress; the enemies being obliged to build up the wall again at their own expence: but as to the damage which *we* had sustained, *we* could procure no redress; consequently were obliged to repair the injury done us at our own cost. This effectually convinced us, that our vain repetitions, formerly put up in a state of ignorance, for *magistrates to receive grace, "to execute justice, and to maintain truth,"* were never heard; because Truth appeared the greatest enemy that they had.

Some time after this, a *man* came into the meeting, at a time while I was preaching, dressed in a woman's bonnet, petticoat, and a black oil-skin cloak, his face smeared with tallow, and coloured with soot: he placed himself in a corner of the room, and stood motionless, till the audience were thrown into confusion, and then he withdrew. The next day we were hooted through the village, and were told that the devil had made his appearance at our meeting the night before; and so the event nearly justified: for not many days after, this very man was sent to Kingston jail for debt; but as he was a friend to the High Church, a minister and some others raised a contribution, in order to release him, which in a short time was effected accordingly. However, although
he

32 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

he again appeared abroad, he never afterwards insulted us: but one day, as he was sitting in his chair, the devil entered into him in reality; as he jumped up, cried out, ran to the Bible and Common-Prayer Book quite distracted, then rushed into the street, and was obliged to be brought into the house again by force, and put to bed: but he told his fellow-persecutors that he should have one more race, and that would be his last; then made his escape a second time; and with no other covering but his shirt, ran into the Red Lion yard, where he was again secured, brought back, dressed, and again set up in a chair. A third time, however, he escaped from all their hands, and ran down what is called *Moulsey-lane*, his fellow-persecutors pursuing him; and when they had secured him, he bit at them like a dog. By force they brought him back again, and once more set him in his chair, where shortly he closed his eyes in death.—His name was Scurving.—*Thus God cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them (a).*

After this awful display of divine vengeance, we had, if I may be allowed the expression, a cessation of arms; and were allowed to assemble together for prayer and preaching, without going with our lives in our hands. The family, whose servants generally led the van, returned to London for the winter season; and now we began to think we had fought as

(a) Psal. lxxviii. 49.

good soldiers of Christ Jesus (a), and through God's everlasting love were more than conquerors (b). Our enemies shut their mouths at us, and we were in hopes that the last bow that was bent, had discharged the arrow of the Lord's deliverance (c).

Accordingly, we were now favoured with some comfortable meetings; our hearts were happily united to each other; and the more dangers we waded through, the more conspicuous did the hand of God appear, and the more invincible we found his armour to be.

In this day of prosperity we were joyful; but after a few months were over, came the day of adversity, in which we were obliged to consider (d); finding, by woeful experience, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God (e).

In the spring following the family returned to Ditton, which gave fresh hope and life to our adversaries, who had hitherto met with nothing but a constant defeat. Therefore on the next preaching night they made a fresh attempt at Lot's door, to see if their former allies would join them again in this impious and unproclaimed war, which they accordingly did. They then threw bricks and stones, until there was not a pane of glass left. The window-shutters, which were an inch thick, and barred across, were also shattered.

(a) 2 Tim. ii. 3.

(b) Rom. viii. 37.

(c) 2 Kings xiii. 17.

(d) Eccles. vii. 14.

(e) Acts xiv. 22.

34 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

tered to pieces, insomuch that we were obliged to stop up all the windows with brick-work, totally exclude the use of glass, and ever afterwards make use of artificial light, both in summer and winter.

When the engagement was finished, we were informed that our enemies held a council how they should be marshalled the next lecture night. An upper servant, in a certain family, undertook to be the first field marshal, who bound himself with many oaths, that he would pull the *fellow* (meaning *me*) out of his *hole*, as he was pleased to term the *pulpit*; but in this undertaking he had no better success than the forty Jews, who had bound themselves with a great curse, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul (a). The evening arrived; I heard them sound to arms, attended with a band of rough music. Some called in the scattered troops from their respective quarters, by ringing the church bells; some with oaths and halloos shouted for the battle, while others were no less busy in storming the place with bricks and stones. I sat at home and heard their uproar, till my very soul sunk within me, and indeed I entertained some thoughts of *turning back in the day of battle* (b). But this word soon put my cowardice to flight, *he that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, shall find it* (c). I then left my habitation, and went

(a) Acts xxiii. 12.

(b) Psal. lxxviii. 9.

(c) Matt. x. 39.

through

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 35

through the confused ranks of this enraged host to our place of worship, with no other armour than half a grain of faith in my heart, and a little Bible in my pocket. Thus armed, I delivered my message, and returned home in safety, escaping the threatening of their ungodly leader, who happened it seemed to be absent. We were afterwards informed he was sent on that day to London; but fearing he should return too late, rode furiously in his way home, that he might save his oath, and execute his promise. But ere he arrived within the shout of their camp, his horse threw him; he was conveyed to a public-house, where he lay in his blood many days. Thus his horse, as well as Balaam's ass, wisely fought for Israel, though their riders were mad enough to fight against them.

Surely God will take his own part *against those who intend evil against him; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform: therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them (a).*

This divination against Israel not having the desired effect, a council was held among the parish officers, who ordered a dinner at a public-house, and their consultation being ended, they came to the following resolution, *viz.* That a bench of magistrates were to be informed of my having intruded myself into their

(a) Psal. xxi. 11, 12.

36 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

parish, without having gained any legal settlement, and if possible that a summons should be immediately procured, after the justices were informed *that a fellow who came in there to sojourn only, would now needs be a judge (a).*

First, a complaint was laid against my dame's fruitful womb, which generally brought forth once a-year : said they, he has a large family ; but surely this was no great crime, seeing we are commanded to *increase and multiply (b).*—After this, my poverty was exclaimed against, which none experienced the bad effects of, except myself, as I always took care to pay my debts ; and if poverty and honesty be coupled together, they surely favour more of virtue, than of vice ; this, therefore, could be no great sin, because *God maketh poor and maketh rich—it is he that bringeth low, and lifteth up.* My occupation was next laid in the balance, and was found to be no more than the laborious calling of coal-heaving, at ten shillings per week. *A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food (c).*—And, lastly, the greatest crime of all was, that I, with such a family, so poor, so ignorant a person, and only an intruder into their parish, should presume to be a preacher ; yea, preach too against the church, the parson, and all the parish. This charge, indeed, was true ; and none could help it, if they preached God's

(a) Gen. xix. 9.

(b) Gen. i. 22.

(c) Prov. xxviii. 3.

word. A summons was accordingly sent, and much general joy appeared at the thoughts of removing this enemy of the church. They then went and informed a neighbour of mine what feats they had performed, which doubtless *deserved all praise*, as it was done in defence of the church. This neighbour secretly sent for me, informing me of their proceedings against me; and as he was a collector of the King's taxes, he received the tax from me, and gave me a receipt, in order to settle me there as a parishioner. When the day arrived, I obeyed the summons; and as my poverty had been represented in a deplorable light, I took care to appear as well dressed as possible. A certain gentleman, who feared God, attended to supply me with money, if any were wanting: two attorneys at law, likewise, came from London, to afford me any assistance that I might require. Those two gentlemen demanded of the magistrates my legal right to the parish of Thames-Ditton; first, as a licensed minister; and secondly, as having paid the King's taxes, which the bench granted. A gentlemen took me into a carriage, and carried me home, while my enemies were branded with shame, God's visible blast appearing so plain on the measures of this wise sanhedrim. At my return I gathered my flock together, and delivered a discourse from this text, *They said among the heathen, they shall no more sojourn there (a)*. But God

(a) Lam. iv. 15.

38 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

says, *the bounds of our habitation are fixed*, and so we found it; for another poor man, whom they supposed to be an enemy also to their church, was likewise summoned before the bench, who came home a parishioner as well as myself; so they could neither remove the ring-leader, nor the second in command. When we had finished our devotions, we parted in peace and happiness, saying, as Israel did of old, *many a time have they afflicted us from our youth up, but they have not prevailed against us (a)*; nor is it likely they ever will, while God has one single soul to call by his grace—I will work, says God, and who shall let it? This world is a stage for action, a scaffold for work, and a place of graves for rest; and when the human race shall have acted their several parts, the building of mercy will be compleat; and when the dead have had their appointed repose, Time shall strike his last number, and that shall bring on the *midnight cry*, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh (b)*: then this stage shall come down, the scaffold shall be struck, and all that *sleep in their graves shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (c)*. And then shall appear the Sun of righteousness, whose glorious beams shall bring on the blessed morning of eternal day, *in which the upright shall surely have dominion (d)*.

We made several attempts to bring these offenders to justice; but all our endeavours proved in vain;

(a) Psal. cxxix. 1, 2.

(b) Matt. xxv. 6.

(c) Dan. xii. 2.

(d) Psal. xlix. 14.

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 39

for Satan is not divided against himself; if he was, how should his kingdom stand (a) ?

Our disappointment in this respect gave fresh encouragement to our enemies, they crying out in triumph, "there is no law for them;" and that *they* might do just what they pleased. Accordingly, two men came one night, one of whom was a Roman catholic: they swore at me in a most awful manner, even in the meeting. One of them soon ⁱⁿ after fell out of a boat into the Thames; but through the tender mercy of our God, his life was saved: and not many days after, the other fell overboard also; whose escape was so narrow, that there was scarcely a *step between him and death*. This awefully alarmed his conscience, and his visage proclaimed the terrors of his mind; his very joints were loosed, and his knees shook together. These circumstances struck them so forcibly, that, as they were one day at dinner, they remarked what an *unlucky* place Ditton was, as nothing but misfortunes had befallen them ever since they came thither. *Fortune, Luck, and Chance*, are the Trinity of fools; had they been wise men, they would have looked higher.

The Lord's displeasure was visibly seen in another judgment, which appeared among the ringers, who frequently rung the church bells, either to drown my voice, or to summon their fellow-companions in mischief, to disturb me and those who attended me in

(a) Matt. xii. 26.

40 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

my ministry. One Sunday evening in particular, they had been ringing; and after the peal was over, they went to wrestling, in which cruel game, on God's sacred day, one received a fall and broke his leg, and now is *gone to the house appointed for all living* (a).

Another poor hardened youth had got himself entangled in a bell-rope, and tossed in such a manner, as obliged him to apply to an hospital in London, from whence he returned, and still remains a cripple. — Thus God striketh them as wicked men, in the open sight of others (b).

But what shall I say? an ignorant mind, an impenitent heart, and a seared conscience, are a coat of mail put on by the devil; and to be left to live and die in it, is an awful judgment from God. Our Saviour calls it *Satan's armour, wherein he trusteth; when the Lord taketh away that, the spoil is said to be divided*; that is, as I conceive, the devil takes the armour, and the Saviour both the body and soul (c).

Without either fee or reward, I preached among the inhabitants of Thames-Ditton during six years successively, and seldom went a day to prayer dry-eyed before God during that whole time. But God answered my prayers into my own bosom, and them to the confusion of their faces. How dreadful, then, must the state of that people be, when the hearts of

(a) Job xxx. 23.

(b) Job xxxiv. 26.

(c) Luke xi. 22.

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD. 41

those who fear God are hardened against them, the mouth of prayer stopped for them, and God declares that his Spirit shall no more strive with them? It is well for such, if the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah do not *fare better in the general judgment than them (a)!*

The person whom I mentioned at the beginning of this treatise as officiating priest, and who performed the mock-funeral solemnity when my effigy was burnt, soon after found the terrors of a guilty conscience, and declared that the infernal fiends pursued him wherever he went. At one time he leaped into a pond; but was got out with safety: he afterwards attempted to throw himself from a window; but was happily prevented. In short, his intellects were much impaired for a considerable period; but for some time past he is a little recovered. However, to this day, he labours under many afflictions; and I hope in the Lord that he has seen his error; as I am informed that when he was asked by some of his companions, why he did not deride and abuse us, as he used to do; his answer was, *Let them alone, they are wiser than we.*

Oh! it is awful to wage war against Christ, who is the Lord of hosts, mighty in battle; he is perpetually mounted on his white horse, and carries a bent bow against his adversaries, as well as a crown for his friends.—*And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer (b).—*

(a) Luke x. 12.

(b) Rev. vi. 2.

42 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

God grant that the poor man may find grace in his sight, as he has delivered him from pouring contempt on his word and commandment; and receive an answer to that petition which is often put up in hypocrisy, *namely, forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts.*

Notwithstanding that the Almighty had displayed his judgments in so conspicuous a manner upon them, yet they most awefully persisted in persecuting us; in-
somuch that some who formerly encouraged them in their wickedness secretly, have been ashamed, when in the morning they have beheld our shattered meeting, and the road covered with bricks, stones, and old *tin ware*—which last article was used by this rebellious band of *rough musicians*, in order to drown my voice, and confuse me in my preaching. One night when I was discoursing from this solemn passage, *The resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment* (a), a person who stood at the door to mock, make a riot, and disturb the congregation, uttered this awful expression when I concluded, “D—n the fellow, all that he has said is lies!” and went his way. But not many days after, as he was riding in a single-horse chaise, (he being much intoxicated with liquor), and driving furiously, he overthrew his carriage against some pieces of timber, one of which his head pitched upon, and broke his jaw-bone, received a wound quite through his cheek, and had one of his ears almost beat off. When he got up, he said, “O God! why am I so drunk?”

(b) Heb. vi. 2.

—In consequence of this, he was confined to his bed many days; and after being a little recovered, and his persecuting spirit being somewhat checked, whenever he met me or my wife, he always addressed us civilly.

Here God seemed to single out the offending members: the *mouth* that had cursed, and the *ear* that had heard, were distinctly punished, which gave me some room to hope, that he saw his error. However, the wounds which he had received in this fall proved incurable; his cheek in particular baffled the efforts of the most skilful, laid him on a sick bed again, and finally in his grave. I shall forbear mentioning his name, nor shall I descend to any particular relative to his death; chusing rather to suppress them, as his widow, who lives in London, often attends my ministry, and is, I am informed, a woman who truly fears God.

This violent persecution, which continued so many years, was partly owing to a woman, who formed an infamous and unlawful connection with a certain gentleman in the commission of the peace, who resided at some distance from Ditton. This *hireling lady* complained to him about my preaching the Gospel, it being so offensive to her; and indeed it was no wonder, when her unhallowed calling was so offensive to the Gospel of Christ. No sooner was this virtuous complaint made, than attended to: for there came a man to me, just as I was going into my pulpit, accompanied with a number of others, to aid and assist

44 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

him, if need required, who desired me to produce my licence, and likewise the licence of the meeting; informing me at the same time, that he was authorized to make this inquisition. After much threatening, I ascended the pulpit, and preached from these words, *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus (a).*

The next time that I preached, the person above-mentioned came again, and desired to know my authority for preaching: I accordingly shewed him my licence; but the man of the house, where the meeting was held, refused to shew the licence for the meeting: this caused much disturbance, and a great many threats. Notwithstanding this, I went up and preached from the following text, *Have we not charged you, that you should no more teach nor preach in this name; and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and do you intend to bring this man's blood upon us (b)?*

These troublesome people came a third time, making the same kind of riot as before; upon which I preached from this text, *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ (c).*

At length we evidently saw one part of the church service, which is offered up by our persecutors, answered and fulfilled in our behalf; namely, "that those evils which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us were brought to

(a) Acts iv. 29, 30. (b) Acts v. 28. (c) Acts v. 42.

nought, and by the providence of God's great goodness they were dispersed; that we his servants being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto him in his holy church, through Jesus Christ."

It is to be feared that those gentlemen *will be much cast down in their own eyes*, when they appear before the Judge of quick and dead, having made themselves on earth as traps to ensnare souls for Satan. And these women can fare no better, who have hired themselves out in the service of sin, the wages of which is no less than *death in all its latitude* (a).

Since I quitted my house at Ditton, the woman I allude to has been delivered of a child, and afterwards deserted by her keeper. And another of those mockers at the glorious Gospel of the Son of God has been found drowned in a pond: Providence frowning on his circumstances, and he being involved in debt, have led people to suspect that he was his own executioner. Another ring-leader of this unlawful host has since eloped with a sum of money, not his own property, leaving a wife and family to the mercy of an inhospitable world. Several others too, who were the most unwearied in persecuting us, seem to lead a most desperate life of rebellion against God; and no wonder; for if the Gospel be not *a savour of life unto life*, it is *a savour of death unto death* (b). Therefore they that preach that Gospel, are *a sweet savour unto God, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish* (c).

When I left the parish of Ewell, (mentioned in the former part of this treatise), there were two men who

(a) Rom. vi. 23. (b) 2 Cor. ii. 16. (c) 2 Cor. ii. 15.

46 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

had been very bitter enemies to the Gospel which I had preached among them. One of these men frequently assaulted me on the high road, made wry faces, or, as his insolence termed it, looked me out of countenance, and used every effort to provoke me to anger. His wife frequently attended my ministry; which circumstance gave him great offence, and for this he often beat and abused her. At one time in particular he took her out of bed, beat her in the most cruel manner with a large staff, and afterwards turned her out of doors naked on Ewell Common, and thus exposed her to the rigour of a frosty night. In the morning following he went in search of her, and was under some apprehensions that she had perished through the severity of the weather. At last he found the poor suffering woman, who had taken shelter in a hovel, among some straw, scarcely alive, where, in all probability, had she remained a little longer, she would have fallen a victim to his brutality. But an all-seeing God suffered him not long to reign: he was soon after visited with a long and severe fit of illness, during which time he desired to see me. I accordingly attended him once or twice from Ditton: he seemed much distressed, read and wept continually, but appeared very ignorant of the plan of salvation to the last moment of his life.—*Thus man giveth up the ghost, and where is he (a)?*—This man's name was Sargant.

Another man was likewise a great opposer of the Gospel, though in a private manner: he would not

(a) Job xiv. 10.

insult us publicly, but circulated many dreadful falsehoods, to make us and religion appear contemptible. The holy scriptures, prayer, and every thing that is sacred, he treated with derision: he affirmed that our praying consisted in our crawling after a cat, in order to see who could catch her first; and this gross absurdity he declared was a truth; and that he himself had been an eye-witness to the ceremony. The bent Bow of God, however, soon stopped this rebel tongue; for as he was one day *driving* (as it is termed) a stove of gun-powder, consisting of many barrels, the drying-house took fire within, which communicated the flames to the sieves of powder; all then immediately went up, levelled the building with the ground, and dashed the poor scoffer at the word of God and prayer into eternity in one moment, without so much as allowing him to call on his name.—His name was Gatten.

○ We may truly say with David, *How terrible art thou in thy works, O Lord: through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee (a)!*

I shall rest satisfied with adducing the foregoing instances of the goodness and mercy of God to me and my little flock. Through all the threatenings, stonings, and fightings with which we were assailed, God still preserved us. And surely, if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, *when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth (b).*

(a) Psal. lxxvi. 2.

(b) Psal. cxxvi. 2, 3, 6.

Thus,

48 THE NAKED BOW OF GOD.

Thus, Christian reader, have I briefly related how *God bent his Bow, and made it ready (a)*, and how he *shot out his arrows, and destroyed the persecutors (b)*. If my reader is one of the number who can open his mouth against the religion of Jesus Christ, he had better sit down first, and consult with himself, whether he is able, hand joining in hand, although to the number of ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand. If he is not, he had better send an embassage of confession and prayer, while he is a great way off, and desire the conditions of Gospel peace (c). Real religion is the cause of God; and whoever opposes it, God will defend it. No opposer can conquer in this battle; the God of armies will ever keep the field; and every enemy of this great King shall find that *his arrows are sharp (d)*.

Perhaps, reader, thou art one who are happily delivered from this impious war, and made willing to be a good soldier of Jesus: if so, then rejoice with Paul, and say, *he hath shewed forth all long-suffering and patience in me, as a pattern to others who shall hereafter believe on him to life eternal*. But if thou art one of the persecuted, take encouragement from hence, stand fast in the Lord, and watch his hand; *God shall shoot at thy enemies with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded*. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves; all that see them shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doings (e). 4 AU 64

(a) Psal. vii. 12.

(b) Psal. cxliv. 6. (c) Luke xiv. 31.

(d) Psal. xlv. 5.

(e) Psal. lxiv. 7, 8, 9.